United Nations E/2002/66

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
New York, 1-26 July 2002
Items 7 (e) and 14 (a) of the provisional agenda*

Coordination programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Follow-up to, and progress in the implementation of, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 56/132 of 19 December 2001, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly with an assessment of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system, including by providing information on key achievements, lessons learned and best practices, and to recommend further measures and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. The report is also intended to facilitate the Council's first-time consideration of the new sub-item 7 (e), mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, introduced in accordance with Council resolution 2001/41.

* E/2002/100.

** The document was submitted late in order to reflect in the analysis the results of all the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council that met in 2002.

02-39449 (E) 210602

The report focuses on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of 2001, and of its functional commissions during their sessions held in 2002. It also reviews the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

The report highlights the extent to which intergovernmental bodies are including attention to situations that are specific to women in their work. It also reviews progress in reflecting gender perspectives systematically in sectoral areas covered by the commissions. The report proposes a number of steps that could be taken to enhance attention to gender perspectives in the work of the Council and its subsidiary machinery.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/132 of 19 December 2001, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the follow-up to, and progress in, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly with an assessment of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system, including by providing information on key achievements, lessons learned and best practices, and to recommend further measures and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. Similar mandates are contained in Assembly resolutions 55/71 of 4 December 2000, 53/120 of 9 December 1998, 52/100 of 12 December 1997, 51/69 of 12 December 1996 and 50/203 of 22 December 1995.

2. The Secretary-General's report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-sixth session in March 2002 focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective in entities of the United Nations system (E/CN.6/2002/2). The report covered policy and strategy development; programme and operational activities (projects, research and advocacy); institutional activities (capacity-building, including training, methodology, tools and development, monitoring and accountability); and coordination and information-sharing (inter-agency activities, and collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)). It also contained recommendations for further steps to strengthen attention to gender perspectives in the work of these entities.

3. The present report focuses on the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery, in particular, its functional commissions. It reviews attention given to gender perspectives by the Council in 2001, as well as by the Council's functional commissions that met in 2002.[1] The report highlights the extent to which gender issues are addressed by these intergovernmental bodies, and makes recommendations for further action. The report also provides some indication of the attention given to gender issues in reports before the Commissions.

4. In resolution 2001/41 of 26 July 2001, the Economic and Social Council decided to establish the regular sub-item "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system" in order to monitor and evaluate achievements made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations system, and to consider further measures to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. The Council also decided to devote the coordination segment of one of its substantive sessions, before 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Council on gender mainstreaming.[2]

5. This new sub-item gives the Council the opportunity to monitor progress made in gender mainstreaming, not only by its subsidiary bodies but also with regard to its own work and to increase efforts to systematically reflect gender perspectives in the discussion and outcomes of all its segments. The present report could support consideration of the new sub-item.

6. The present report also includes a summary of the outcome of the first session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, held from 26 February to 1 March 2002. This section could contribute to the Council's consideration of agenda item 7 (a) (Coordination, programme and other questions: reports of coordination bodies) when it takes up the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

II. Economic and Social Council (2001)

7. The Council paid attention to gender equality issues and the advancement of women during the high-level, coordination and humanitarian affairs segments of its substantive session of 2001. Based on the Council's discussions at its operational activities segment, the General Assembly addressed gender issues during its triennial policy review of operational activities (see resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001).

A. High-level segment

8. The Council's Ministerial Declaration, on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development, called for the promotion of the role of women in social and economic development, including by assuring their

participation in the political and economic life. Gender aspects were included in two of the nine sections of the Declaration, i.e., those dealing with the integration of peace and development, and with development of human capital. The United Nations system was called upon to support pro-poor and gender-sensitive economic and social policies, including employment and income-generating opportunities for poor people, women and youth through microfinance, community-based development and decentralization, enterprise development, food security plans, adequate nutrition and land tenure. In regard to human capital development, the Declaration assigned high importance to the achievement of universal primary education, the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and the achievement of gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement of a basic education of good quality through initiatives such as the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative.

B. Coordination segment

9. The agreed conclusions of the segment (2001/1) noted the role of information and communication technologies in contributing to the empowerment of women and the reduction of gender inequalities.[3]

C. Humanitarian affairs segment

10. The Council considered the question of special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. The Vice-President's summary of the segment noted that gender aspects were raised in several areas. During the general debate, delegations welcomed the engagement of the Security Council in considering humanitarian issues and the effect of conflict on women and children, and expressed strong support for incorporating the gender perspective into all activities. They highlighted the role of women in contributing to the promotion of peace, security and human rights and requested more support for women's groups engaged in these activities. Particular concern was expressed about children in conflict, including the increasing numbers of child soldiers and sexual violence against girls.

11. During the panel discussion on natural disaster preparedness and response measures, delegations stressed the importance of government partnerships with those concerned, particularly with women at the local level as they usually bore the brunt of the impact of disasters. Gender analysis was considered to be a basis for appropriate humanitarian action. At the panel discussion on emergency assistance to groups with special needs, the Security Council's landmark resolution on women, peace and security, resolution 1325 (2000), was welcomed.

D. Operational activities segment

12. During its operational activities segment, the Council prepared for the General Assembly's triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In its resolution 56/201 on this topic, the Assembly welcomed efforts to improve the gender balance in the resident coordinator system, and dealt with "gender" as one of its sections. It welcomed progress achieved in gender mainstreaming in operational activities, and encouraged further work in the area of equitable access to financial and productive resources to ensure a reversal in the feminization of poverty. The Assembly also encouraged continuing efforts to improve the gender balance in positions that affected operational activities and called for renewed and accelerated efforts in gender mainstreaming in the framework of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system in all fields, in particular in support of poverty eradication. The Assembly also encouraged the empowerment of women as a priority for operational activities for development.

E. General segment

13. Among the decisions taken during its general segment, the Council extended the mandate of the Gender Advisory Board to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development for a further four years, upon recommendation of that Commission (Council decision 2001/309).

III. Results of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women

14. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-sixth session from 4 to 15 March and on

25 March 2002. The Commission, in implementing its mandate, also plays a catalytic role in support of gender mainstreaming. To that end, it submits its agreed conclusions as an input to other intergovernmental bodies and processes, as appropriate. In 2002, for example, its agreed conclusions were transmitted to the World Assembly on Ageing and to the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Some of the Commission's resolutions are subsequently reflected in the work of other commissions. Elements of its draft resolution on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan were integrated into a resolution of the Commission on Human Rights dealing with Afghanistan. The Commission also provided input for information to the Council for its high-level segment of 2002. Other action taken by the Commission also aimed at strengthening attention to gender perspectives. For example, the Secretary-General was invited to take a gender perspective into account in his reports on HIV/AIDS. In an effort to develop opportunities for increased attention to gender perspectives in sectoral areas, the Commission was briefed by Secretariat officials of the Population Division and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

A. Agreed conclusions on eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world

15. In its agreed conclusions on this topic, the Commission defined, for the first time, the empowerment of women as the "process by which women take control over their lives, acquiring the ability to make strategic choices". The Commission recognized that globalization brought opportunities and challenges and noted that many women had been marginalized and deprived of the benefits of this process. It called for special attention to the situation of women and children, who often bore the greatest burden of extreme poverty.

16. The Commission agreed on a series of actions addressed to Governments and, as appropriate, the relevant funds and programmes, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, civil society, including the private sector and NGOs, and other stakeholders, aimed at eradicating poverty among women, primarily through their empowerment.

17. Such actions were to include increased efforts to mainstream gender perspectives and the empowerment of women through the whole policy process, from identification to formulation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up. Other actions focused on the role of official development assistance (ODA) and of external debt solutions in relation to women's empowerment; the need for gender perspectives in fiscal policies, particularly taxation policies; in national budget policies and resource allocations; and the promotion of women's full and equal participation in decision-making and in political agenda setting. Other actions targeted women's access to public and social services, including education and health, social protection and social security systems. Actions also referred to equal access to and control over productive resources, finance, capital, credit, information, technology as well as information and communication technologies, and for strategies to increase women's employment and to stimulate their entrepreneurship. The Commission also called for improved collection of data disaggregated by sex and age, development of indicators and gender-specific analysis to measure poverty and progress in the empowerment of women.

B. Agreed conclusions on environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters: a gender perspective

18. The Commission's agreed conclusions on this topic represented the first time that an intergovernmental body considered environmental management and natural disasters from a gender perspective in a comprehensive way.

19. The Commission agreed on a series of actions addressed to Governments and, as appropriate, the relevant funds and programmes, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, civil society, including the private sector and NGOs, and other stakeholders to strengthen gender mainstreaming in environmental management and natural disasters. These actions included calls for mainstreaming of a gender perspective into ongoing research on the impact of climate change, natural hazards, disasters and related environmental vulnerability; collection of data

disaggregated by sex and age; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and development and implementation of gender-sensitive laws, policies and programmes to prevent and mitigate damage.

20. Further policy recommendations focused on women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights, including in disaster reduction, response and recovery, their equal access to information and education on disaster reduction, and on women as full and equal partners in the development of safer communities and in determining priorities for disaster reduction.

21. The agreed conclusions also highlighted the need to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation of all policies and treaties on sustainable development, including in the process of the review and implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World. The agreed conclusions also stressed the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the preparation, work and outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in August 2002.

IV. Results of sessions of other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

A. Commission for Social Development

22. At its fortieth session, held from 11 to 27 February 2002, the Commission for Social Development considered the priority theme "Integration of social and economic policy".

23. The report of the Secretary-General on the integration of social and economic policy (E/CN.5/2002/3) referred to gender issues in relation to poverty, decentralization of government functions and responsibilities, employment, education, and national budgets. In discussing the links between macroeconomic and social policies, the empowerment of people who suffered from social discrimination, in particular women, was seen as one of the preconditions for making markets work for them. The report also highlighted the need to address explicitly the disparate effects of macroeconomic policies on the status of women. In acknowledging that a focus on macroeconomic policies in the market economy had resulted in disparate effects on men and women, the report called for increased attention to the informal and non-market sectors, particularly non-market and unpaid labour, that would better capture these disparate effects. It reviewed the important role of NGOs in promoting social development and gender mainstreaming. In discussing social assessment as a policy tool, the report emphasized the need to promote gender analysis, in particular as gender concerns were a fundamental part of social concerns. Furthermore, the report suggested that the experience gained in mainstreaming of gender perspectives in development policies could provide examples for mainstreaming social concerns.

24. The Commission on Social Development adopted agreed conclusions on the priority theme, containing recommendations for action to promote the integration of social and economic policy at the national and international levels. Gender equality was identified as one of the essential elements for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development. The Commission invited Governments to adopt holistic, integrated, comprehensive and consistent public policies that would: (a) integrate social and economic policies in order to eradicate poverty, promote full employment, enhance social integration, achieve equality between women and men, ensure access to basic social services for all, reduce inequality and mitigate adverse impacts of economic shocks; (b) promote a gender-sensitive and participatory approach, through the involvement of communities, NGOs and social partners, as well as vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in the formulation and implementation of development strategies; (c) pursue pro-poor and gender-sensitive policies, including microcredit and other financial instruments, asset-building, access to resources, information and knowledge, and the strengthening of the links between different sectors of the economy.

B. United Nations Forum on Forests

25. The second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held from 4 to 15 March 2002, dealt with combating of deforestation and forest degradation; forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems; rehabilitation and conservation strategies; and rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests.

26. During each session of the United Nations Forum on Forests a multi-stakeholder dialogue takes place with respect to which gender balance of delegations is encouraged. This year's dialogue highlighted the need to include women in decision-making processes. In his summary of this dialogue, the Chairperson noted a need for those affected by and those implementing forestry policies to be more actively involved in both the planning and decision-making processes. In this context, he recognized the contribution and role of women as practitioners and "family managers".

C. Statistical Commission

27. The thirty-third session of the Statistical Commission was held from 5 to 8 March 2002. It dealt with areas including demographic, social, economic, natural resources and environment statistics, as well as statistical capacity-building. In accordance with the Statistical Commission's multi-year programme of work, gender statistics were not part of this year's agenda.

28. Several reports before the Statistical Commission referred to data disaggregated on the basis of sex. They highlighted, in particular, inadequate coverage, lack of indicators, and the resulting gaps in analysis.

29. In their report assessing the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings (E/CN.3/2002/26), the Friends of the Chair noted that a number of indicators called for separate analysis by sex. They recommended that such analysis should be provided for all indicators, to the extent that the data source supported an analysis by sex. In reviewing the resource implications of new statistical outputs, the Friends of the Chair noted that analysis by sex would commonly be a question of analysing existing data in a different manner in order to provide the required output. In such cases, the resource requirements (assuming the availability of professional skills) would be small. With regard to the rather small number of indicators on distributional issues, the Friends of the Chair concluded that analysis by subgroups (e.g., by sex, region, age group, income groups, ethnic or social classifications), where feasible, would allow for clearer analysis of the issues. One of the shortcomings identified by the Friends of the Chair was the lack of indicators for female participation in professional and senior administrative levels of the labour force that would be comparable to the existing indicators for female participation and gender equality in political participation.

30. The Commission endorsed the recommendations made by the Friends of the Chair. It also endorsed the recommendations on establishing a standing committee for indicators, so as to enable statistics systems to remain engaged in a dialogue on future developments of new indicators.

31. The Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (see E/CN.3/2002/27) sought the Statistical Commission's advice concerning the situation of inadequate coverage of data for the gender empowerment index (currently available for only 64 countries) and the human poverty indices (117 countries). Data for the gender-related development index are available for 146 countries. The Human Development Report Office also emphasized the conceptual and data gaps on gender equality and the need for data on age and sex of the head of households in order to address issues such as deprivation and inequalities within households. The Commission agreed on the need for further improvements to human development statistics.

32. With regard to the development of statistics on e-commerce (E/CN.3/2002/24 and Add.2), two (out of five) country case reports (Canada and Singapore) highlighted the limitations of household surveys on Internet use. Since these surveys were conducted at the household rather than the individual level, important information such as the age, sex, and education of Internet users was lacking.

D. Commission on Narcotic Drugs

33. At its forty-fifth session, held from 11 to 15 March 2002, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs addressed the participation of women in the context of alternative development. Several country case studies, covered in reports before the Commission on drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, contained gender-specific information.

34. The role and participation of women in alternative development was mentioned in two reports before the Commission, i.e., on follow-up to the action plan on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development (E/CN.7/2002/6) and on activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

(UNDCP) (E/CN.7/2002/8 and Corr.1). Noting that the poorest strata of society resorted to the cultivation of illicit crops to complement their insufficient incomes, both reports highlighted the need for continued efforts to ensure increased participation of women in project activities and in organizations such as those aimed at providing alternative income for women. Reference was made to UNDCP's advice and technical support to projects and programmes to monitor the progress in areas such as gender mainstreaming.

35. In a report on the world situation with regard to drug abuse, in particular the spread of HIV/AIDS through drug injection (E/CN.7/2002/2 and Corr.1), some data on usage of various drugs was disaggregated by sex. The report on international assistance to the States most affected by the transit of drugs (E/CN.7/2002/5) gave attention to drug treatment capacity and the provision of services to both women and men. An increased use of women and children as couriers was noted in Central Asia as well as in East and South-East Asia (E/CN.7/2002/4).

36. The Commission, in its resolution 45/14 on the role of alternative development in drug control and development cooperation, urged Member States, in cooperation with the UNDCP, to facilitate a rigorous and comprehensive thematic evaluation for determining "best practices" in alternative development. Such an evaluation could assess the impact of alternative development on human development indicators and drug control objectives, and address the key development issues of poverty reduction, gender, environmental sustainability and conflict resolution.

E. Commission on Population and Development

37. The theme of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development, held from 1 to 5 April 2002, was reproductive rights and reproductive health, with special reference to HIV/AIDS.

38. The Secretary-General's report (E/CN.9/2002/2) covered topics such as: entry into reproductive life; reproductive behaviour; family planning; abortion; maternal mortality and morbidity; sexually transmitted infections; HIV/AIDS; and policy issues related to reproductive rights. The report provided data disaggregated by sex and discussed challenges and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys throughout their life cycles in relation to the theme.

39. A report on national policies and programmes on reproductive rights and reproductive health (E/CN.9/2002/3) reflected experiences in a number of countries with regard to girls' education, women's economic dependence, family planning, reproductive and sexual health, violence against women and female genital mutilation. The report addressed, in particular, the role of men in achieving gender equality, equity and women's empowerment, and showed benefits that resulted from a focus on family planning, maternal health and gender-based violence, gained in Kenya, Pakistan and Uganda. In another report, women's low status, especially their lagging educational attainment, was cited as the main obstacle to fertility decline (E/CN.9/2002/5).

40. The Commission adopted a short resolution on the theme, which also reaffirmed the Beijing Platform for Action and the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, in particular the recommendations relating to reproductive rights and reproductive health.

F. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

41. The eleventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held from 16 to 25 April 2002. Its overall theme was "Reform of the criminal justice system". The Commission considered women principally as victims of crimes — victims of violence, including domestic violence, and trafficking in women. Reference was also made to women as prisoners and to girls in detention.

42. In reporting on the trends in criminal justice reform (E/CN.15/2002/3) considerable attention was given to trafficking in women. With regard to world prison populations, the report identified direct and indirect abuse through overcrowded facilities as factors that contributed to the deteriorating situation of both women and men prisoners. Solutions had to take into account the disparate impact on women and men. The report also referred to a technical assistance project which addressed the issue of female minors in detention and aimed at establishing a specific institution for the detention of girls in conflict with the law.

43. Effective community-based crime prevention (E/CN.15/2002/4) was the topic of an Expert Group Meeting. One of its recommendations called on Governments and civil society to analyse and address the links between transnational organized crime and national and local crime problems, and to design crime prevention strategies that would protect socially marginalized groups, especially women and children, who were vulnerable to the action of organized criminal groups, including those engaged in trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. A separate report (E/CN.15/2002/7) pointed out that the same groups that were trafficking in endangered species also engaged in trafficking in women for commercial sex.

44. A number of suggestions from various actors concerning the main theme, agenda items and workshop topics of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice were before the Commission (E/CN.15/2002/12). These included the needs and concerns of women migrant workers; trafficking in women and children across international borders for forced labour; violence against women in all its forms, including prevention, penalization and victim support services; and the role of women as offenders, victims and decision makers in criminal justice.

45. The priorities of the Centre for International Crime Prevention in technical cooperation activities (E/CN.15/2002/2) included fostering international cooperation and strengthening national capacity-building to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and violence against women. One project would address trafficking in minors and young women. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) had produced a video clip on trafficking in women.

46. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice took action towards the endorsement of guidelines for the prevention of crime. These guidelines would emphasize that effective crime prevention required attention to the different needs of men and women, and the special needs of vulnerable members of society. The Commission also reiterated that plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice should consider the special needs of women in the criminal justice system. The Commission proposed as the main theme for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice "Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice".

G. Commission on Human Rights

47. The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-eighth session from 18 March to 26 April 2002. The Chairpersons of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights. Attention to particular concerns of women is now an established part of the Commission's annual session, and gender perspectives are addressed in many of the areas dealt with by the Commission. As in past years, the agenda included an item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective", with violence against women as a sub-item.

48. The Commission on Human Rights adopted five resolutions addressing women's human rights, i.e., women's equal ownership, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing (2002/49); elimination of violence against women (2002/52); violence against women migrant workers (2002/58); traffic in women and girls (2002/51); and integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system (2002/50). In resolution 2002/49, the Commission decided to consider at its fifty-ninth session under the agenda item on economic, social and cultural rights the issue of women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing.

49. Gender issues were addressed in several resolutions adopted by the Commission.

1. Country-specific resolutions

50. The Commission requested several of its special rapporteurs to include (see resolutions 2002/12 on Burundi, 2002/15 on Iraq, 2002/67 on Myanmar) or to continue to include (see resolutions 2002/14 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 2002/16 on the Sudan) a gender-specific dimension in their work.

51. The Commission expressed its concern with regard to violations of the rights of women, such as sexual violence (see resolutions 2002/14 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2002/19 on Afghanistan, 2002/20 on Sierra Leone, and 2002/67 on

Myanmar), and female genital mutilation (resolution 2002/16 on the Sudan). Several resolutions stressed the importance of equal participation of women in decision-making processes (resolution 2002/12 on Burundi, 2002/14 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 2002/19 on Afghanistan).

52. The resolution on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan (2002/19) highlighted the need to integrate a gender perspective into all United Nations operations. It also emphasized the need to provide specific programmes for all Afghan women and girls to address their special needs and promote their human rights.

2. Issue-specific resolutions

53. The Commission on Human Rights encouraged several Special Rapporteurs to mainstream or to continue to mainstream a gender perspective in the fulfilment of their mandate (resolutions 2002/25 on the right to food, 2002/36 on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, 2002/40 on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and 2002/65 on human rights and indigenous issues). The Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression was invited, in cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, to continue to pay particular attention to the situation of women and the relationship between the effective promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and incidents of discrimination based on sex (2002/48). The Commission appointed a new Special Rapporteur on the right to health, inviting the Special Rapporteur to apply a gender perspective in her or his work.

54. The Commission highlighted the need to apply a gender perspective in work concerning torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (2002/38), enforced or involuntary disappearances (2002/41), the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (2002/57), and mine-awareness programmes (see resolution 2002/61). The Commission also urged States parties to international human rights instruments to make use of data disaggregated by sex in their reports, and stressed the importance of taking fully into account a gender perspective in the implementation of the International Covenants on Human Rights at the national level (2002/78). Governments were urged to address gender-based manifestations when taking effective measures to prevent and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance (2002/68), and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (2002/38).

55. Special attention was drawn to the needs of women in a number of areas, including detention (see resolution 2002/47), extreme poverty (2002/30), the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (2002/40), internally displaced persons (2002/56), migrants and their families (2002/59), disabilities (2002/61), indigenous issues (2002/65), economic, social and cultural rights (2002/24), the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2002/48), and human rights defenders (2002/70). Women's and girls' equal rights were also addressed in the context of adequate housing (2002/21), education (2002/23), food (2002/25), and the right to development (2002/69).

56. The Commission highlighted the fact that human rights education constituted an important vehicle for the elimination of gender-based discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities through the promotion and protection of the human rights of women; and encouraged Governments to consider the establishment of public access to human rights resource and training centres capable of engaging in research, including the gender-sensitive training of trainers (see 2002/74).

V. Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

57. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (formerly Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality), chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, met from 26 February to 1 March 2002. In conjunction with the reform of the ACC machinery and the creation of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the formal subsidiary machinery based on "standing committees" had been replaced in 2001 by a flexible system of networks that encouraged interaction on a continuing basis, utilizing modern information technologies. This decision by the CEB had been facilitated by the level of maturity of networking that had been reached among agency specialists in different sectors.

58. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality embraced this progression, as it built on the five years of experience of the former Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality with informal intersessional work, largely

through electronic networking, and the use of task forces and working groups with designated task managers. Once-a-year sessions of the Network are held immediately prior to the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women to allow gender specialists from entities of the United Nations system to combine their work in the Network with participation in the session of the Commission. These annual meetings are an opportunity to review progress in intersessional work, discuss policy concerns and emerging issues of concern to all members with regard to gender equality, develop common approaches, and hold theme-specific workshops to enhance the capacities of members to act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming.

59. Discussions during this year's session focused on: gender mainstreaming in programme budgets; tools and indicators for gender-impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation; gender mainstreaming in the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework process; women, peace and security; gender and financing for development; gender and information and communication technologies; and WomenWatch, online databases on good practices and gender training materials. The Network held a one-day workshop on training and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming.

60. While the Network welcomed the establishment of the CEB and its two high-level committees (on programme and on management), it also decided to form a task force chaired by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, to look into ways for the Network to collaborate with the new CEB structure. Emphasis would be placed on ensuring that gender perspectives are addressed systematically by the CEB and the two high-level committees in all areas. The Network would also seek clear directives from the executive heads regarding gender issues, and their continuing commitment to implementing gender mainstreaming policies in the United Nations system. This would require strong and visible commitment. The responsibility of the CEB for gender mainstreaming was critical, and the Network would serve as a resource to the CEB. The Network would continue to develop substantive issues and make system-wide action-oriented recommendations that would be brought to the attention of senior managers and executive heads.

VI. Conclusions

61. The Commissions that met in 2002, as well as the Council during its substantive session of 2001, addressed gender issues to varying degrees, and in different forms. Several commissions included, in general terms, attention to gender equality in their work. Some commissions addressed gender equality as a means towards goals pursued by them, such as sustainable development, or identified sectoral tools, such as ICT, as means towards gender equality. The participation of women in activities under consideration, including in operational activities and in decision-making, was stressed repeatedly. The need for gender balance was also noted.

62. Several commissions dealt in some detail with situations that are specific to women within their sectoral mandates, such as in relation to crime prevention, human rights, or drug abuse. Others agreed on the need for more and better data disaggregated by sex and gender-specific analysis to achieve comprehensive and adequate treatment of particular areas or issues, and as a basis for policy development.

63. While some progress should be noted, gender perspectives are still not always addressed as a matter of routine, and the analysis of issues and the formulation of policy options are not always informed by a consideration of gender differences and inequalities. Thus, opportunities are not yet consistently identified to narrow gender gaps and support greater equality between women and men. The nature of the topic and the availability of gender-specific information influence the degree of attention paid to gender perspectives. For example, while the Commission on Human Rights now routinely deals with human rights concerns that are specific to women, the gender perspectives of the whole gamut of rights dealt with by the Commission should be further explored. Similarly, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice paid attention to situations that are specific to women, such as trafficking in women, but greater attention to the gender dimensions of criminal justice is required. At the same time, progress was made by the Commission on Social Development in addressing the gender perspectives of the interface of macroeconomic and social policies. Having held only its second session, the United Nations Forum on Forests is at an early stage of

implementing its mandate and has significant opportunities for addressing gender perspectives.

64. The degree of attention in the reports before intergovernmental bodies to situations that are specific to women on the one hand, and to the gender perspectives of a particular subject or issue on the other, appears to have a positive correlation to the degree of attention given to these matters by the intergovernmental bodies. This would confirm the importance of the Council's request to the Secretary-General, contained in agreed conclusions 1997/2,[2] to present issues and approaches in a gender-sensitive manner when preparing reports so as to provide the intergovernmental machinery with an analytical basis for gender-responsive policy formulation.

VII. Recommendations

65. Based on the analysis of the work of the Council in 2001, and that of several of its commissions in 2002, the following recommendations are presented to the Council for its consideration.

66. The Council may wish to express appreciation to its functional commissions for the progress made in attention to situations that are specific to women and to the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the work of its subsidiary bodies. It may wish to invite its subsidiary bodies to continue these efforts so that a comprehensive assessment of progress over time can be undertaken, and gaps identified when the Council takes up gender mainstreaming at one of its future coordination segments, before 2005. The Bureau of the Council may also wish to address progress and challenges in gender mainstreaming during joint Bureaux meetings with functional commissions.

67. The Council could invite its subsidiary bodies to address gender perspectives in relation to the thematic issues of their multi-year programmes of work, or in relation to annual themes, as appropriate. The Council could request its functional commissions, when preparing draft multi-year programmes of work, to identify priority opportunities for reflecting gender perspectives.

68. The Council may wish to recognize that lack of data disaggregated by sex, and gender-specific information constitute in many instances challenges in addressing gender perspectives. At the same time, the Council should recognize that available information and analysis should be used more systematically.

69. The Council may resolve to include attention to situations that are particular to women, and to gender perspectives, in all its segments, and in particular its high-level, coordination, humanitarian affairs and operational activities segments, both during the discussions, and in the outcomes.

70. The Council could also encourage its functional commissions to increase collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women.

71. The Council may wish to reiterate its request to the Secretary-General that gender perspectives be included in all analysis and policy recommendations submitted to intergovernmental bodies, in accordance with its agreed conclusions 1997/2.

Notes

[1] Commission on the Status of Women, Commission for Social Development, United Nations Forum on Forests, Statistical Commission, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Human Rights, Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Commission on Science and Technology did not meet in 2001. The Commission on Sustainable Development met as preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, sect. A, para. 4.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/56/3/Rev.1), chap. V, para. 7.